

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 24, 2012

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on April 24, 2012, pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Jeff Hirsh and Paul MacDonald.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Melissa Avedisian, Arlene Oliva, Greg Barbeau and Amanda Wilmouth, RICC; Martha Sheridan and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Steve Habl, VETS; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen and Kaitlyn Bizier, DDC; Evan Smith, Discover Newport; Mark Brodeur, RIEDC and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:30. Noting that a quorum had not been reached, she postponed approval of the March minutes.

CVB

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Sheridan to begin the PWCVB report. Ms. Sheridan presented the Providence Hotel Performance Report for the month of March indicating occupancy has improved over the same period last year but average daily rate is lower for the month than last year. Ms. Sheridan stated that year to date occupancy as well as average daily rate is up over last year. Ms. Sheridan reported that definite bookings for the City are up for the year although room nights are down. She commented that meeting planners are reluctant to commit to room blocks because many attendees prefer to arrange their own accommodations. Ms. Sheridan highlighted the organizations that have signed contracts for the Convention Center. They include Leslie University, JLC Live Construction Training Show, AACC International, Philips Healthcare and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Tentative pieces of business that the CVB is pursuing include the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, Northeastern Retail Lumber Association, North American Jewish Day School Conference, American Studies Association and the National Association of Healthcare Transportation Management. Ms. Sheridan reported on March sales activity. She noted that the 2012 Ambassador Awards Luncheon was held at the Convention Center. Ms. Sheridan also noted the sales team participated in a Boston client event for 20 clients and 10 industry partners. Ms. Sheridan stated that her team participated in the Meetings Industry Council of Colorado and made several sales calls in the Denver area. In March site inspections were held by Bruhan Maharashtra Mandal of North America, SRA International

northeast Meeting and the MBA Research & Curriculum Center Conclave. The monthly Netroots conference call was made, a meeting with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Committee was held and a pre-promotion with the American String Teachers Association took place.

Ms. Adamo reported that the Rhode Island Sports Commission is the winner of the national Association of Sports Commissions award for their outstanding marketing campaign. Ms. Adamo noted that traffic to GoProvidence.com increased 45% in February 2012 over the same month in 2011 and 69% in March 2012 over March 2011. Ms. Adamo stated that she had attended a conference on integrating social media into public relations. She also noted that a video tour of the Convention Center is going well and should be available for use in sales promotions shortly. Ms. Adamo distributed "Tourism Today", a new newsletter designed to promote the work of the PWCVB specifically and the hospitality industry in general. On the Public Relations side, Ms. Adamo stated that the CVB had hosted a media fam around the Death Cab for Cutie concert at the VETS, worked with the Dunk and FOX Providence to promote X Factor and coordinated media outreach for Alpha Kappa Alpha conference.

Ms. Sheridan announced that the CVB is moving its offices to the GTECH building in August. A discussion took place on the advantages and opportunities that the new location will afford.

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DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini called upon Cheryl Cohen to present the Dunkin' Donuts Center report. Ms. Cohen began by highlighting the many media events for the Circus. Ms. Cohen reported that clowns made appearances on NBC's Tuesday's Child, FOX Rhode Show where they illustrated what goes on at Clown College. Rhode Island Monthly also interviewed Circus personnel about Clown College. Ms. Cohen said that the Circus had mini performances at the Lima School, Cranston YMCA and the Cumberland/Lincoln Boys & Girls Club. Ms. Cohen noted that the Elephant Walk would take place on Thursday at 11:00 AM and the Animal Brunch would be held on Friday. Ms. Cohen said that a Chef cook off (Circus Chef vs Local Chef) is being scheduled. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the upcoming X Factor event that will be here in May and again in June. Ms. Cohen stated that this event will bring maximum exposure to the facilities and the City of Providence. She said that FOX has wrapped the bridge between the Dunkin' Donuts Center and the Convention Center and the bridge will be the featured backdrop for many shots of the City and the venue. Ms. Cohen said that a live studio will be set up in front of the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Cohen reported that street banners will be installed courtesy of the CVB and welcome signage will be placed at the airport and train station. The City's Yellow Jackets are prepared to assist with visitor information and Johnson & Wales will create an X Factor 3D cake on site.

Ms. Cohen presented a marketing update. She reported on

Ticketmaster Marketing Expansion and explained that Facebook fans can see what events their friends are going to, get personalized recommendations and buy tickets without leaving Facebook. Ms. Cohen said that a mobile APP for Ticketmaster will send special alerts to a phone and allow fans to share, connect and engage with other event attendees. Ms. Cohen noted that Ticketmaster will integrate with Twitter in the summer of 2012 where fans will be prompted to follow the Dunkin' Donuts Center's Twitter account after they Tweet a link from Ticketmaster.com.

CONVENTION CENTER

Mr. McGinn reported that the revenue goal of \$8.7 million will be difficult to meet although the sales team continues to work very hard. Mr. McGinn said that tentative events include the RISD Graduation in May 2013, the national Haitian Conference in August 2012, US Fustal National Championships in July 2013 and 2014. Mr. McGinn reported on events that were contracted during the month such as JLC Live, New England Independent Booksellers, Grow Smart and the RISD Fashion Collection. Mr. McGinn noted that the sales team had attended a Boston client event with the CVB and Capital Grille, attended the National Association of Sports Commissions in Hartford, CT and the MP-INE March Monthly Meeting at Harvard Law School. Mr. McGinn said that site tours were held with the Rhode Island Comic Conference, One Day University, IBC USA Bioprocesses

International Conference and Exhibition as well as the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium Conference, the International Association for Identification Annual Education Conference and U.S. Fencing.

VETS

Mr. Hahl reported that the first phase of construction at the VETS is wrapping up and that there have been some remarkable improvements to the building. Mr. Hahl said that the new LED lighting will be a significant time saver because he will no longer spend hours changing light bulbs. Mr. Hahl noted that Death Cab for Cuties and Willie Nelson are selling well. He also noted that graduation season will be upon us in June and the theater is booked for several graduations.

Mr. Hirsh arrived at 1:30 and Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March Marketing Committee meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the March meeting

DISCOVER NEWPORT

Mr. Smith reported that the CVB has changed its name to Destination

Newport to more accurately portray the mission of the agency. Mr. Smith stated that Newport had a great 1st quarter and should be a very busy destination throughout the remainder of the year. He said that there will be four America's Cup race days as well as two practice days. Mr. Smith noted that viewing the races will now be easier because the course can be seen from Fort Adams.

Mr. Smith stated that he and Ms. Venturini as well as other tourism and restaurant people have banded together to oppose the proposed meals and cottage tax hikes. Ms. Venturini said that she has been told that the tax hike will not be approved by the legislature but she said that until it is removed from the budget she will not let her guard down. Ms. Venturini said that this is an attack on our industry.

Mr. Brodner from RIEDC reported that the Governor's budget includes an increase in appropriations to the Tourism Division. He said that he is grateful for the proposed appropriation of \$500,000 although most State Tourism Departments receive \$10 million. Mr. Brodner commented that the announcements of direct flights to and from Japan and Boston will open markets.

Ms. Venturini asked if there was any further business. Mr. McCarvill reported that he will appear before the General Assembly concerning naming rights for the Convention Center. Hearing no other business, Ms. Venturini looked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it

was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:40 PM